
The Reverend Dr. *BATEMAN*'s
S E R M O N

Preached before the Right Honourable the
L O R D - M A Y O R
AND THE
Court of A L D E R M E N,
In the Cathedral Church of *St. Paul,*
On **TRINITY-SUNDAY, May 29. 1743.**

Price Sixpence.

Willimott Mayor.

*Tuesday the 31st Day of May 1743,
and in the Sixteenth Year of the
Reign of King GEORGE the Second,
of Great Britain, &c.*

IT is order'd, That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Dr. BATEMAN for his Sermon preached before this Court, and the Liveries of the several Companies of this City, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, on Sunday the 29th Instant, being the Anniversary Day of Thanksgiving for the Restoration of the Royal Family and Government, and that he be desir'd to print the same.

MAN.



A
S E R M O N 8

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the

L O R D - M A Y O R

A N D T H E

C o u r t o f A L D E R M E N,

In the Cathedral Church of St. *PAUL*,

O n T R I N I T Y - S U N D A Y, *May* 29. 1743.

Being the Anniversary Day of Thanksgiving to
Almighty G o d for the Restoration of the Royal
Family and Government.

By *EDMUND BATEMAN*, D. D.

Rector of St. *Dunstan* in the *East*, and Chaplain to His
Grace the Archbishop of C A N T E R B U R Y.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. and H. P E M B E R T O N, at the
Golden Buck in *Fleetstreet*. M D C C X L I I I.

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the

L O R D - M A Y O R

AND THE

C O U R T of A L D E R M E N.

In the Cathedral Church of St. Paul.

On Trinity-Sunday, May 29. 1743.

Being the Anniversary Day of Thanksgiving to
Almighty God for the Health of the Royal
Family and Government.



By EDMUND BARNARD, D.D.

Rector of St. Dunstons in the West, and Chaplain to His
Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.

L O N D O N.

Printed for J. and H. Parnerton, at the
Golden Ball in Newgate-Street.

ECCLES. VII. latter Part of the 16th Verse.

----- *Neither make thyself over-wise: why
shouldst thou destroy thyself?*

THERE are different Interpretations given of these Words: They have been considered as the Scoff of the Scorners against the Pursuers of Virtue and true Wisdom, as the Voice of those who turn good Attempts into Ridicule, and represent them as ending only in Vanity and Ruin. And this Interpretation may seem to be countenanc'd by an obvious Reflection, that it is in fact impossible for any Man to be over-righteous or over-wise, however he may be reproached as pretending to be so. True Righteousness and true Wisdom do as much restrain us from Rigidness and Ostentation, as they excite us to Equity, and to a vigorous Exercise of our rational Powers. Indeed the Generality of Interpreters seem to consider this Text as a Caution given to all, with Seriousness, in *Solomon's* own Person. And as no Man can in fact be too righteous, or too wise, it must then be intended against the Appearance and Affectation of Righteousness and Wisdom.

It

It is likewise thought by some that the Advice was given to Magistrates only; but as the Expressions in it are general, and daily Experience convinces us that it is possible for those of low Degrees, as much as for those who are in Authority, to transgress against it, I shall consider it as a Caution given to all.

In order to represent the whole of the Advice, and the Reason given for it, I might enlarge on the Excess of seeming Righteousness, and the Excess of seeming Wisdom separately, and shew how Destruction will probably attend each of them. But my present Discourse shall be confined to the Text—*Neither make thyself over-wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?*

And were I to enlarge on all the Particulars implied in these Words, it would be no difficult Matter to shew that we may affect to be over-wise with respect to GOD ALMIGHTY, our Neighbour, and Ourselves; that by such Affectation we shall probably bring Destruction upon ourselves—But that, notwithstanding the Caution given, the Scoffer has no good Reason for taking the Saying into his Mouth, in order to set at nought the sincere Professors of Religion and Virtue.

But the first of these Particulars, viz. the affecting to be over-wise with respect to God Almighty may be the most suitable Subject now. And therefore to a Representation of such Affectation to a
brief

brief Account of the Danger of it — to a Proof that the Scorners can (however) with no Propriety take the Text into his Mouth — and to an Application to the awfully religious, and national Solemnities of this Day, shall this Discourse be confined.

I. We may then make ourselves over-wise with respect to God Almighty, by enquiring too curiously into His Nature and Attributes, and thereby attempt to reduce them to the shallow Limits of an human Understanding. As it is of the utmost Importance to us to know that there is a GOD, it is therefore an incumbent Duty upon us to search diligently till we find HIM; but in this Search we need not go far: For HE has been graciously pleased to make the Arguments by which his Being is proved to us most obvious and easy. If there were not a GOD, nothing could be. Every the minutest Object of the Creation points out its Divine Author. But as it would not be of any good Consequence to us to know GOD now as HE is in Himself, — *such Knowledge is rendred too wonderful and excellent for us, we cannot attain unto it.* And whenever any Approaches are made by us Mortals towards a Representation of the Almighty and his Perfections, we naturally fall into negative Descriptions, saying that HE is every thing that is Great and Good in an infinite Degree, we

not knowing what *Infinity* is. And surely we cannot hereby raise in ourselves or others any positive Idea of that which we may attempt to describe. It is then vain Philosophy to aim at such Descriptions, and must be censur'd in the same Manner with those Affectations of Wisdom which St. *Paul* reproves, and by which the World was so far from being improved, that it was reduced to an utter Ignorance as to the Worship of that God, whose intimate Nature and Essence those Refiners might pretend to have a Knowledge of. And what is said of the Supreme Being in general is equally applicable to all Doctrines revealed concerning Him. They are delivered to us as Truths from God, not subjected to a philosophical Enquiry. If they were to be explained by Man, they would be the Object of Knowledge, not of Belief. Whoever then makes such Attempts, exalts too far his own Nature, or represents too low the Divine, and therefore is over-wise with respect to his great Creator.

Indeed (to use the Words of an able Writer)
“ Whilst Men on one hand expect a rational Account, and clear Ideas of what is wholly *unaccountable* by us, and of which we can have no
“ Conception at all: And on the other hand,
“ Men go about with endless Labour to explain
“ what is *inexplicable*, there can be no End of
“ those *Controversies*, which multiply upon us every

“ ry Day. But if we all agree to leave off speak-
 “ ing of what we know nothing of, and freely
 “ own what we must confess whether we will or
 “ no, that we can have no *positive Ideas* of the
 “ Nature of God as He is in Himself, the Con-
 “ troversy will soon cease. *” And what is pro-
 ved to be revealed in Holy Writ, will be establish-
 ed on that Divine Authority which has revealed
 it.

Therefore, *Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let
 not thine Heart be hasty to utter any thing before
 (I add, concerning the Nature of) God: for God is
 in Heaven and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy
 Words be few.*

2. We may be also over-wise with respect to
 God Almighty, when we impertinently pass our
 Judgments on the Equity of his Dealings with the
 Children of Men. For we cannot judge surely of
 any Proceedings, unless we have a certain Know-
 ledge of what ought to be the Rule of their Acti-
 ons whose Proceedings we judge of, and a Capacity
 of applying each particular Case to the general
 Rule. Now this we cannot always arrive at even
 with respect to our Fellow-creatures. For there
 may be several very good Reasons why a Man may
 seem to deviate from what the World will approve;

B

but

* See an Answer to *Christianity not mysterious*, by Peter
 Brown, B. D. Afterwards Bishop of Cork.

but if the Person acting is absolved in his own Conscience, and before his God, he is just and equitable notwithstanding the partial Censures of other Men.

Indeed in a great Variety of Instances we may judge truly of each other. All notorious Violations of the Safety and Property of our Brethren; all equivocal Evasions of Equity, &c. we may assuredly condemn, because we are certain Persons acting thus have broken the golden Rule, of doing to others as they would they should do unto them.

But with respect to God Almighty, we have no such Rule to be directed by; neither do we certainly know how to apply particular Effects to any general Rule. Even those very Effects which when brought about by Men, are criminal, are daily produced by the immediate Hand of Divine Providence, with strict Justice, and for most wise Ends. And it is our Duty to acquiesce in them; for if we pretend to account for the particular Reasons of them, we are in Danger of running either into Presumption as to God, or possibly into rash Censure as to our Brethren. For, with respect to God Almighty, unless we could take in at one View the whole Design of Providence, we cannot be sure how each Action contributes to bring about his general good and wise Purposes; and therefore he is *over-wise* who pretends to determine how far
any

any particular Interposition of Providence does or does not so contribute. And as to the Danger of falling into rash Censure with respect to Men, that is represented by our LORD, in the Case of the *Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.* For they who told him of it, seem to have attempted to vindicate the Justice of Divine Providence in permitting so terrible a Disaster to befall them, by imputing it to a Judgment on them for their uncommon Crimes. In Opposition to such Rashness our Blessed Lord observes (*Luke xiii. 2.*) *Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay, but unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* From which Reflection of our Saviour, and from his Repetition of it with respect to those *who perished by the fall of the tower of Siloam,* I conclude that it is our Duty to acquiesce in general in the Dispensations of Providence; — that we may be *over-wise* in attempting to assign particular Reasons for them; — and may be in Danger of passing an ill grounded Censure upon our Neighbour's moral Character.

And as we may be thus over-wise, when we pretend to form a Judgment of God's Displeasure; we may transgress, on the other hand, by presuming to censure his Justice, because he sometimes suffers the Wicked to prosper. Unless we suppose Miracles perpetually to interpose, there must, in

divers Instances, be *one Event to the Righteous, and to the Wicked*. Were it not so, Virtue would be nothing, it would be no matter of Choice. And there are so many gracious Ends answered even by the Sufferings of good Men, and temporary Success of the Bad, that whoever seriously considers the Frame of human Nature,—acknowledges a future State,——and the manifold Infirmities of the best of Men, must conclude that God Almighty's Dispensations are *Holy, Just, and Good*, altho' for a time he afflicteth his Saints, and suffers the Unrighteous to go unpunished. Let us not then be over-wise, presuming to pronounce concerning God's Favour or Displeasure from such Events.

Nations indeed (as such) being only of temporary Continuance, may more probably be supposed to receive the Reward of their Deeds in this World. And it is true in Fact, that the Prosperity, or Misery of the *Jews*, was very manifestly and constantly determined by their Observance or Neglect of Religion and Virtue as a People. But as they were the *Peculium* of God, no universally conclusive Argument can be drawn from them to other Nations. And tho' it is true, that in general *Righteousness exalteth a Nation, and Sin is the Reproach of any People*, both by the natural Tendency of the Thing, and by the just Judgment of God; yet as to particular Instances it becomes us to be

be very cautious in our Conclusions. All Nations do consist of Individuals, who are capable of being rewarded or punished hereafter for their Doings as well in a Civil as in a Natural Capacity. It is therefore unsafe many times to judge of their general Virtue by what befalls them here.

It is true likewise when any dreadful Calamities befall a People, and they are sensible of the Growth of Irreligion and Vice amongst them; they may (and so may private Persons) ascribe such Evils to their Crimes, and own that they have suffered no more than their Iniquities did most righteously deserve. But will the Argument hold the other way? Are there any People so assuming, as to pretend to be strictly meritorious in the Sight of God? Will any maintain that the Blessings they enjoy are only the Recompence of their Goodness? If such there are, I am sure their Arrogance is a Proof of the Absurdity of their Claim.

Consistent with this Observation was the Conduct of the pious Compilers of some of our occasional Forms of Prayer; when, on the one hand, they acknowledge, that "it was the crying Sins of this Nation which brought down *the* heavy Judgment upon us" [the Martyrdom of King *Charles the First*] we may add, and all the Calamities previous to, and consequent upon it; And on the other hand gratefully acknowledge, that, (with respect to the joyful Occasion of this Day's Solemn-

Solemnity) "Not our Merits, but thy Mercy, O
" Lord, did rescue and deliver us." * *We cannot then by searching find out God, we cannot find out the Almighty* (either in his Nature, or in the Reason of his Dispensations) *to Perfection.*

II. I would, in the next place, briefly observe, that this Affectation of over-much Wisdom tends to our Destruction. It is, I suppose, generally acknowledged, that a Man's exerting the Powers of his Soul on Objects not suited to them, and thereby diverting them from what they ought to have in View, is unnatural, the Powers lose all their Strength, and thereby bring on the Person so vainly employed final Ruin. Now the Understanding of a Man, we know, is that Faculty by which he compares such Ideas as he is capable of receiving, and from such Comparison draws Conclusions. If therefore he attempts to compare things with each other, of neither of which, or of either of which he has no clear Notions, and pretends to draw Conclusions from such Comparisons, he consequently dissipates his Thoughts by exalting himself above measure, and thereby contributes to his own Destruction, as a reasonable Creature.

Now we do offend in this manner by those Affectations of Wisdom I have mentioned. Who-
ever

* See the Forms of Prayer for the 30th of *January*, and the 29th of *May*.

ever presumes to dive into the Nature and Counsels of God, employs his Understanding about Objects not suited to it; and if he ventures to compare the one or other with such things as present themselves before us here on Earth, he may be guilty of a spiritual Idolatry, by imagining a Likeness between the Great God and his Creatures,—he may represent the God of Truth like a Man who may lie, —like the Son of Man who may repent. And consequently subject himself to the Punishment, which the entertaining so low a Thought of God Almighty does deserve.

We find when *Moses* asked the Lord, *When the Children of Israel enquire of me, saying, Who hath sent thee unto us? the Lord answered, Thou shalt say, I AM hath sent me unto you:* Thereby denoting that it would be Presumption in *Moses*, or in the Children of *Israel*, to make any farther curious Enquiries concerning the Divine Nature. And whoever consults the Bible will find the Vanity of human Attempts to account for God's Dealings with us, in Variety of Instances set forth and condemned. Let us therefore dread the Thought of falling under so severe a Condemnation, acknowledging that no Man can see God, and live: that tho' *Righteousness and Equity are the Habitation of his Seat, yet Clouds and Darkness are round about him.*

III. But

III. But then this Caution may be carried too far, if the Scoffer takes the Text into his Mouth. And yet this has been too often done. Have not some concluded that there are Absurdities in Christianity, because there are mysterious Doctrines in it? Have not others maintained that Chance governs the World, because the Conduct of it is in many Instances repugnant to the Rules of human Policy? But to the first of these we answer, that a due Attention to the obvious Distinction between Doctrines that are *contrary to*, and Doctrines that are *above* our Reason, should silence their Scoffs. To the former of these we cannot, if we will be true to ourselves, give our Assent,—because from the original Principles of our Nature we are sure they cannot be true: But in the latter we may and ought to believe, if they are duly attested,—because tho' our natural Powers may not supply us with an Argument to prove why they are true, neither do those natural Powers furnish us with any Argument against the Truth of them, and therefore the Interposition of God's Authority should determine us to believe.

Again, as to the Inference that Chance governs the World, because the Ways of Providence are not to be accounted for by Men; I presume that Chance, or something worse than Chance (as it is commonly understood) even Passion and Prejudice would

would entirely prevail, if there were no Providence. So jarring are the Interests of Men with each other—So inconsistent are most Men with themselves. But since every thing we see proves the Being of God, and his Being proves his Providence, no particular Objections should startle us. We may see a general Reason (drawn from the Nature of an All-perfect Being) for concluding that what is done is just, altho' we cannot at present discover why it is: In like manner (as in the Case before spoken to) we may see a general Reason for believing a Doctrine to be true, the Manner of which we cannot as yet understand. And in both Instances the Scoffer abuses his Understanding, by concluding that there are *Absurdities* in the Doctrines of Christianity, and *Improprieties* in the Government of the World, because we cannot conceive *How* or *Why* these things are: which is just as wise (according to Mr. Locke's Sentiment) as if a Man were to fold his Hands, and sit down and perish, because he has not Wings to fly.

IV. I would now apply what has been said to the awfully-religious and national Solemnities of this Day.

1. It is certainly an Affectation of too much Wisdom in any to doubt concerning the Doctrine

C

of

of the Blessed Trinity, because we cannot discover *How* it should be. By giving our Assent to it, we only pay that Obedience to God which is due from our Understanding. When *Nicodemus* came to our blessed Saviour by Night, and our Lord talked concerning the mysterious Doctrine of Regeneration, and *Nicodemus* said, *How can these things be?* our Lord answer'd, *Art thou a Master in Israel, and knowest not these things?* (i. e. the Doctrine of the *Jewish* Church might have instructed thee, as to the matter of Fact, that such things are reveal'd.) And then he proceeds, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, We teach what we do know, and testify what we have seen:* By which *Nicodemus* is taught not to expect Explanations of the Manner of Mysteries, but enjoin'd Belief upon the Authority of Christ himself, the Divine Teacher.

It is not, in like manner, our Business to pretend to discover God Almighty's Nature — How THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST are the very and Eternal God; but whether it is in Fact revealed in Holy Writ, that this is true. Now that it is in Fact so revealed, is, I think, abundantly evident from the Form of Baptism;—from the Divine Attributes and Perfections being ascribed to the Son and to the Holy Ghost equally with the Father;—from the wonderful Works of Creation, Redemption, &c. ascribed to them all;—
from

from Worship's being in the most strict Sense required to be paid to them all, &c. (which are at least implicit Proofs of this great Truth.) And moreover I think it is plainly taught in that Text of *St. John*, *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.** For the Genuineness of it has been supported by very ancient Manuscripts, the Connection of the preceding and following Verse is lost without it: It was quoted by *St. Cyprian* before the *Nicene Council* †, and indeed has been supported by such a Variety of Arguments by great and good Men of our own Communion ‖, among Protestant Dissenters of this Nation ‡, and by Foreigners ∴, that I think to deny the Truth of it, is to shut our Eyes against the Light. Let us not therefore, by an Affectation of over-much Wisdom, resist the Demonstration of the Spirit; but acknowledging that the Divine Nature is by us unsearchable, and that his Word is true, let us humbly cry out, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine Unbelief.*

C 2

2. And

* 1 John v. 7.

† De Patre, Filio & Spiritu Sancto scriptum est, & hi tres unum sunt. Vide Divi Cypriani Librum de Unitate Ecclesiæ, p. 195. 196. *Benedict. Edit.*

‖ See a Letter to Dr. Bentley concerning the *Complutensian* Edition of the New Testament by Bishop *Smalbroke*, and Mr. *Twelves's* Critical Examination.

‡ See Mr. *Slofs's* Sermons on the Trinity.

∴ See *Bengelii Prolegomena*.

2. And as we ought to be cautioned against the Affectation of over-much Wisdom from the Consideration of the awful Nature of the Ever-blessed Trinity, and taught our Duty humbly to assent to those Manifestations of it which have been graciously revealed; so should the wonderful Loving-kindness vouchsafed to these Nations, in bringing back King Charles the Second to his undoubted Right, teach us to admire and adore the secret Workings of Divine Providence which conducted the Restoration: and consequently we should hence learn not to attempt to fathom the deep Counsels of God. History does now indeed, in some measure, trace out to us the Steps in which this great Work proceeded. But when we put the Accounts together, and observe what seemingly contradictory Principles and Counsels tended to the same End;—How steadily and cautiously the Great General acted from the time he made his *solemn Protestation* *, never to draw his Sword against his Prince

(perfe-

* Nempe cum in Bello olim captus fuisset Vir in paucis insignis Regi fortissime dimicans & squalore vinculorum in Arce Londipensi juxta cum venerando Episcopo [Matthæo sc. Wren. Episc. Eliensi] diu maceratus fuisset, nec ulla spes Libertatis recuperandæ (rebus Regiis indies labentibus) ipsi affulgeret, diu à Cromwello, qui hominis fortitudinem & rei militaris peritiam probe noverat, in suas partes sollicitatus est; tandemque ut libertate suâ unâ cum præfecturâ in Bello Hibernico frueretur persuasus, contra Rebelles Hibernicos, minime verò contra Regem se armaturum protestans, Cumque jam, acceptis conditionibus, suis valedicturus esset, ad hunc Episcopum accessit, ad cujus pedes provolutus Venerandi Patris benedictionem petiit, hoc sanctè in se recipiens, Regi suo se hostem nunquam futurum. See Dr. Barwick's Life.

(persevering in his Loyalty from that moment till Death.) When we further observe how the Counsels and Designs of those who usurped Power were blasted and defeated, and the *Proud* were *scatter'd in the Imagination of their Hearts*. When these, and ten thousand other such Incidents occur to us from History, surely we should gratefully acknowledge *that this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in Eyes*. We should learn not to trust in the Arm of Flesh, nor in the Counsel which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but in the Almighty and All-wise God.*

And as it graciously pleased H^M manifestly to interpose to restore to us our Religion, and our happy Constitution, let us hence learn Piety to God, Love to our Country, and Fidelity to our Prince. Indeed the Principles of Religion and Loyalty have a natural and necessary Connection with each other. He who fears God as he ought, will for that Reason honour his Vicegerent; and he who honours the King in a becoming Manner, will be sure in the first place to pay his Adoration to the KING of KINGS.

And

* When General Monk's Friends and Attendants began to renew their Thanks and Acclamations to him for his great Service and Faithfulness in producing the Effects of this Day; he was so far from being exalted with any Opinion of his own Merit, that he declined them all; telling them, *He had all along been beset with so many Difficulties and Jealousies upon him, as that all Thanks and Acknowledgments must be only paid to the Miracle of DIVINE PROVIDENCE.* See the Life of General Monk, p. 312.

And whenever we presume to think of God Almighty's Nature, and of his Dealings with us his sinful Creatures, may we be cloathed with Humility, with the utmost Reverence and Submission. If ye behave thus, and act agreeably in other Things, ye will receive the Prize of your high Calling in that great Day, when *they that are truly wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament*, and shall be rewarded with various Degrees of Honour and Happiness, proportioned to the various Improvements which they shall have made in real Wisdom, *even as one star differeth from another star in glory.*

Unto God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour and Glory, Dominion and Power for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.



When General Mordaunt began to receive their Thanks and Acclamations for his great Service and Faithfulness in producing the Peace of the Day; he was so far from being contented with any Opinion of his own Merit, that he declined them all; telling them, He had all along been ready to lay down his Life and Fortune for his King and Country, and that he was now only left to the Mercy of his Enemies. See the Life of General Mordaunt, p. 212.